

Mam. There was a man.

Her. Nay, come sit downe: then on.

Mam. Dwelt by a Church-yard: I will tell it softly,
Yond Crickets shall not heare it.

Her. Come on then, and giu't me in mine eare.

Leo. Was hee met there? his Traine? *Camillo* with him?

Lord. Behind the rust of Pines I met them, neuer
Saw I men scowre so on their way: I eyed them
Euen to their Ships.

Leo. How blest am I

In my iust Censure? in my true Opinion?

Alack, for lesser knowledge, how accurs'd,

In being so blest? There may be in the Cup

A Spider steep'd, and one may drinke; depart,

And yet partake no venom: (for his knowledge

Is not infected) but if one present

Th'abhor'd Ingredient to his eye, make knowne

How he hath drunke, he cracks his gorge, his sides

With violent Hefts: I haue drunke, and scene the Spider.

Camillo was his helpe in this, his Pandar:

There is a Plot against my Life, my Crowne;

All's true that is mistrusted: that false Villaine,

Whom I employ'd, was pre-employ'd by him:

He ha's discover'd my Designe, and I

Remaine a pinch'd Thing; yea, a very Trick

For them to play at will: how came the Posternes

So easily open?

Lord. By his great authority,

Which often hath no lesse preuail'd, then so,

On your command.

Leo. I know't too well.

Giue me the Boy, I am glad you did not nurse him:

Though he do's beare some signes of me, yet you

Haue too much blood in him.

Her. What is this? Sport?

Leo. Beare the Boy hence, he shall not come about her,

Away with him, and let her sport her selfe

With that shee's big-wit, for 'tis *Polixenes*

Ha's made thee swell thus.

Her. But I'd say he had not;

And he be sworne you would beleue my saying,

How e're you leane to th'Nay-ward.

Leo. You (my Lords)

Looke on her, marke her well: be but about

To say she is a goodly Lady, and

The iustice of your hearts will thereto adde

'Tis pity shee's not honest: Honorable;

Prayse her but for this her without-dore-Forme,

(Which on my faith deserues high speech) and straight

The Shrug, the Hum, or Ha, (these Petty-brands

That Calumnie doth vse; Oh, I am out,

That Mercy do's, for Calumnie will feare

Vertue it selfe) these Shrugs, these Hum's, and Ha's,

When you haue said shee's goodly, come betweene,

Ere you can say shee's honest: But be't knowne

(From him that ha's most cause to grieue it should be)

Shee's an Adulteresse.

Her. Should a Villaine say so,

(The most replenish'd Villaine in the World)

He were as much more Villaine: you (my Lord)

Doe but mistake.

Leo. You haue mistooke (my Lady)

Polixenes for *Leontes*: O thou Thing,

(Which he not call a Creature of thy place,

Least Barbarisme (making me the precedent)

Should a like Language vse to all degrees,

And mannerly distinguishing leaue out,

Betwixt the Prince and Begger: I haue said

Shee's an Adulteresse, I haue said with whom:

More; shee's a Traytor, and *Camillo* is

A Federarie with her, and one that knowes

What she should shame to know her selfe,

But with her most vild Principall: that shee's

A Bed-swaruer, euen as bad as those

That Vulgars giue bold't Titles; I, and priuy

To this their late escape.

Her. No (by my life)

Priuy to none of this: how will this grieue you,

When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that

You thus haue publish'd me? Gentle my Lord,

You scarce can right me thoroughly, then, to say

You did mistake.

Leo. No: if I mistake

In those Foundations which I build vpon,

The Centre is not bigge enough to beare

A Schoole-Boyes Top. Away with her, to Prison:

He who shall speake for her, is a farre-off guiltie,

But that he speakes.

Her. There's some ill Planet raignes:

I must be patient, till the Heauens looke

With an aspect more fauorable. Good my Lords,

I am not prone to weeping (as our Sex

Commonly are) the want of which vaine dew

Perchance shall dry your pitties: but I haue

That honorable Griefe lodg'd here, which burnes

Worse then Teares drowne: beseech you all (my Lords)

With thoughts so qualified, as your Charities

Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so

The Kings will be perform'd.

Leo. Shall I be heard?

Her. Who is't that goes with me? beseech your Highnes

My Women may be with me, for you see

My plight requires it. Doe not weepe (good Fooles)

There is no cause: When you shall know your Mistis

Ha's deseru'd Prison, then abound in Teares,

As I come out; this Action I now goe on,

Is for my better grace. Adieu (my Lord)

I neuer wish'd to see you sorry, now

I trust I shall: my Women come, you haue leaue.

Leo. Goe, doe our bidding: hence.

Lord. Beseech your Highnesse call the Queene againe.

Antig. Be certaine what you do (Sir) least your Iustice

Proue violence, in the which three great ones suffer,

Your Selfe, your Queene, your Sonne.

Lord. For her (my Lord)

I dare my life lay downe, and will do't (Sir)

Please you t'accept it, that the Queene is spotlesse

I'th' eyes of Heauen, and to you (I meane

In this, which you accuse her.)

Antig. If it proue

Shee's otherwise, he keepe my Stables where

I lodge my Wife, he goe in couples with her:

Then when I feele, and see her, no farther trust her:

For euery yench of Woman in the World,

I euery dram of Womans flesh is false,

If he be.

Leo. Hold your peaces.

Lord. Good my Lord.

Antig. It is for you we speake, not for our selues:

You are abus'd, and by some putter on,

That will be damn'd for't: would I knew the Villaine,

I would

Scena Secunda.

Enter Paulina, a Gentleman, Gaoler, Emilia.

Paul. The Keeper of the prison, call to him:

Let him haue knowledge who I am. Good Lady,

No Court in Europe is too good for thee,

What dost thou then in prison? Now good Sir,

You know me, do you not?

Gao. For a worthy Lady,

And one, who much I honour.

Paul. Pray you then,

Conduct me to the Queene.

Gao. I may not (Madam)

To the contrary I haue expresse commandment,

Paul. Here's a-do, to locke vp honesty & honour from

Th'accesse of gentle visitors. Is't lawfull pray you

To see her Women? Any of them? *Emilia?*

Gao. So please you (Madam)

To put a-part these your attendants, I

Shall bring *Emilia* forth.

Paul. I pray now call her:

With-draw your selues.

Gao. And Madam,

I must be present at your Conference.

Paul. Well: be't so: prethee.

Heere's such a-do, to make no staine, a staine,

As pacies colouring. Deare Gentlewoman,

How fares our gracious Lady?

Emil. As well as one so great, and so forlorne

May hold together: On her frights, and greeses

(Which neuer tender Lady hath borne greater)

She is, something before her time, deliuer'd.

Paul. A boy?

Emil. A daughter, and a goodly babe,

Lusty, and like to liue: the Queene receiues

Much comfort in't: Sayes, my poore prisoner,

I am innocent as you,

Paul. I dare be sworne:

These dangerous, vn safe Lanes i'th' King, besheew them:

He must be told on't, and he shall: the office

Becomes a woman best. He take't vpon me,

If I proue hony-mouth'd, let my tongue blister.

And neuer to my red-look'd Anger bee

The Trumpet any more: pray you (*Emilia*)

Commend my best obedience to the Queene,

If she dares trust me with her little babe,

I'll shew't the King, and vndertake to bee

Her Advocate to th'lowd'st. We do not know

How he may soften at the sight o'th' Childe:

The silence often of pure innocence

Perfwades, when speaking failes.

Emil. Most worthy Madam,

your honor, and your goodnesse is so euident,

That your free vndertaking cannot misse

A thruiing yssue: there is no Lady liuing

So meete for this great errand; please your Ladiship

To visit the next roome, he presently

Aquaint the Queene of your most noble offer,

Who, but to day hammered of this designe,

But durst not tempt a minister of honour

Least she should be deny'd.

Paul